/150 cont./

593 342 461 [198] Nothing marks better the small place the conjugal bond has in a man's life; imagine the torture which this forced living and crowding together represent for each of these women! The Boni of today, much richer than their ancestors and better equipped with tools, are singularly lazier in building houses; no longer is anyone seen to sculpture and decorate the façades lovingly; when a man, after many recriminations, decides to build a house for his wife, he is content most of the time now with a simple shelter with plaited walls, which does not require 30 days work.

595 As we have said, each man may take as many wives as he wishes, on condition that he can supply their needs; but in practice the maintenance of a household is so heavy a load that most men have only one or two wives; only one to our knowledge has three. In fact, it is contrary to custom to free oneself by paying for work which one must do for one's wife. We have never heard it said that a rich man (many of them have hundreds of thousands of francs in savings) paid money in place of a piece of work, or paid someone to do it for him. The furnishing of imported objects is particularly burdensome, especially cloth, kitchen utensils (Boni women are infatuated with aluminum objects), and occasionally jewels. The Boni conceded in 1958 that the maintenance of a wife amounted to 30 to 40 thousand francs a year at least. If one considers that a hard-working man earned about 120,000 francs a year, that he spent 30 to 40 thousand francs a year for himself, that he often had /151/ in addition to provide for the needs of his aged parents and share the expenses of the festivals of the lineage, one sees that he could not have more than two wives at the same time. As for less hard-working men, who have no more than 60 to 80 thousand francs a year in ready money, they have a great deal of trouble in facing the maintenance of a single household, and many divorces have no other cause.

593 [461] [556] [454] [439] [511] [434] 511 [695] [434] 511 [586]

/287 cont./

539 --I have a pot, it cooks uppermost, it does not cook downward;

(It is a pipe.)

--A hole in a hole, fantasia comes out of the hole;

(It is a flute.)

--A post that makes a house;

(It is an umbrella.)

--I cut a path to... far away. Coming back, I see it no longer, everything is blocked.

(It is the wake of a boat.)

Proverbs

You have a sum of money which you like. You take it to buy an object which you will like less.

[454] (Picturesque justification of hoarding which is one of the principle passions of the Refugee Blacks.)

Thou thoughtst thus, but it is not thus that thou camest.

(Thou didst not act according to thy thought.)

I cut a clearing, I take a handful of groundnuts, it fills a chest and a barrel.

(Idea of fertility.)

Pushed and pulled, in what position do you hold yourself erect?

(One must know how to make a definite decision.)

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157 /289 cont./
241 in a sector recognized to be undamaged. But objections
31 immediately come to their minds: one would not feel at home, people would be jealous of one another; above all, the children would go pilfering fruit and vegetables in the clearings of other families. The Refugee Blacks are unanimous in thinking that the children of one village put together in a single place would constitute a scourge much worse than the manioc-ant, and that dispersion is the wisest solution for maintaining the peace of families.

562 One observes likewise that the total freedom of woman,
241 and the custom which leaves to her /290/ the free disposal of the products of the clearing, contribute toward preventing the development of agriculture with an eye to selling. In order
[592] to undertake large clearings farmed jointly by one household, it would be necessary to have very unified and stable households, which is rare.

157 Difficulty of grouping for common advantage. The Refugee
476 Blacks are incapable of forming groups voluntarily to undertake the execution of a job with an eye to common advantage. The small groups which get together for fishing, working gold, etc. are formed of intimate friends or near relatives and are hardly larger than four or five persons.

157 The Refugee Blacks are still less capable of grouping them-
454 selves into societies looking toward future benefits. Putting a part of their resources into a common pot with that of another seems to them not only illusory but immoral. Because of this fact there exists among them no way to group financial assets, sometimes good-sized.

426 Lending without interest is practiced rather commonly, having to do with small sums between near relatives or intimate friends. If a man feels capable of earning his living by buying a motor, he will succeed rather easily in finding the necessary money by borrowing from his brothers or friends, 10,000 francs